

[Lillie Craig]

August 12, 1939

Lillie Craig (Mother)

Catawba, N. C.

Ethel Deal, Writer

Dudley W. Crawford, Reviser Original Names Changed Names

Lillie Craig Lula Cobb

Robert E. Lee Stonewall Jackson

Abraham Lincoln Howard Taft

William James

Madison County Maiden County

Gastonia Golden

Andy Craig Amos Cobb

Mr. Rudisill Mr. Rankin

Mary Lou Minnie Sue

Herbert Hoover Theodore Roosevelt C9- N.C. Box 1.

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"I don't see how I'll be able to tell anything. It's all I can do to carry this year old baby much less look after these four other children." Lula Cobb was waiting in the lower hall of the court house for someone to carry her home. "Yes, they are all mine. One of them is out of my sight now. I declare, Howard Taft tries my patience every time I leave home with him. Go, hunt him, Stonewall Jackson. "

Lula's mouth was so full of snuff it was hard to understand her conversation; tiny streams of it ran from the corners of her mouth. Stonewall Jackson, the oldest child, had rounded up Howard Taft and brought him back.

"Now," said the mother, "you set down on them steps and stay there.

"I've been a widow a little over a year now. I have a time. I live on a farm. I get to hoe some for other people. They pay me fifty cents a day and give me my meals when I get to work. The welfare gives us about all we have. Stonewall Jackson looks after the chaps and keeps house while I work. He's thirteen and a lot of help to me."

Stonewall had perched himself on a radiator a few feet from me. He didn't look to be over nine. "Has he been sick?" I asked.

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"Oh no, he's a healthy boy." Lula replied. "He just don't grow much. My Lord, Minnie Sue is gone now. Stonewall, get down from that contraption and go after her." It was only a few minutes 'till we heard a cry from the sheriff's office. Stonewall had found her and was dragging her out, kicking and screaming.

"This beats the dickens," Lula declared, "a body can't have a minute's peace when they have a passel of younguns to watch. Stonewall, you take these two least ones and walk them up and down the hall."

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My sympathy went out to the little frail lad. He was so pathetic and appeared so under-nourished.

“Stonewall is a good boy. He always minds me. “Lillie pulled up her dress and wiped her mouth. Two boys happened to be passing at the time. They looked once and burst out laughing.

“I'm poor and shabby; this dress I got on is my best.” The dress was yellow and brown checked gingham and would have looked all right if it had been clean. She wore cotton stockings and tennis shoes. Lula's hair, drawn back tight and twisted in a knot at the back, seemed to make her eyes protrude. She grinned constantly. “I'm trying to live for the Lord, so it's me and the Lord for it.

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“I was born in Maiden County. I usta live in Golden and work in the mill. I married Amos Cobb when I was twenty. He worked in the mill too. Soon as I got big Amos wanted to quit the mill and go to the farm. We been living on the farm ever since. Lula shifted her baby from one arm to another and spat. I can't do 'thout my snuff, it keeps me from getting hungry. I wish Mr. Rankin would hurry. I'm afraid Stonewall Jackson will take one of his spells. He almost faints when he gets hungry.” A cry had set up at the lower end of the hall and Lula rushed to the scene of action, her flat heeled shoes making a funny noise on the tiled floor. It was Minnie Sue who had insisted on climbing the stairs and had fallen. The children were all brought back to the stairway and seated in a row. “Now, the first youngun who gits up from there will hear from me.” Mrs. Craig said. “ My husband was a pretty good farmer. We managed to live decently until he dropped dead. He didn't have no more education than I got. I went through the second grade. I can read and write a little, but not well enough to brag about. We never have had a car in our life. Maybe, I could get married again and get a man who is able to give me one. I don't think I'll be so foolish; I've got too

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4 many younguns. Guess I better let well enough alone.” The children had been very quiet and good for sometime. Now they set up a howl for something to eat.

“It's four-o'clock; time for that man to come by for us. We better get ready. Stonewall Jackson, you put water in that quart jar we brought. Here Theodore Roosevelt, it's your turn to carry this paper bag; William took care of it coming-That's got the baby's diapers in it.” She told me. “We'll save trouble and time by standing in the door, so we can hop in quick as soon as Mr. Rankin comes.”